



North Central Idaho News

CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in April increased to 3.8 percent from March's 3.5 percent. In April 2006 the rate was 4.3 percent. See North Central Idaho Table 1 for more detailed data.

POPULATION

Between 2000 and 2006, the population in north central Idaho increased only six-tenths of a percent, according to recently released data by the U.S. Census Bureau. Idaho's population increased 13.3 percent during the same time. Clearwater County lost 6.8 percent of its population in that time. The region's economic engine, Nez Perce County, grew by only 2.4 percent, far below increases generated in other Idaho economic centers such as Canyon County, where population rose 31.8 percent, and Kootenai County, which posted an increase of 21 percent. Clearly, the north central region of the state has not participated in the strong population growth experienced by other regions. See more details in North Central Idaho Table 2 on page 11.

WATER SUPPLY

Idaho's water supply had a promising outlook at the season's start, but that slowly deteriorated with warm winter weather and lack of storms. Thirty automated snow-measuring stations in the Idaho monitoring area were melted out by May 1, according to the recently-released Natural Resources Conservation Service's Idaho Water Supply Outlook Report. Normally only three sites have melted by May 1. In north central Idaho, April precipitation was 66 percent of average, just enough to keep the year-to-date precipitation above average. Snow packs range from 73 percent of average in the North Fork Clearwater basin to 56 percent for the Lochsa basin. Stream flow forecasts call for 80 percent of average runoff volumes.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

CLEARWATER COUNTY

- The state of Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe and the U.S. Department of Inte-

North Central Idaho Table 1: Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Apr 2007*	Mar 2007	Apr 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,310	29,960	29,450	1.2	2.9
Unemployment	1,140	1,040	1,260	9.6	-9.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.5	4.3		
Total Employment	29,170	28,920	28,190	0.9	3.5
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,330	30,220	29,610	0.4	2.4
Unemployment	1,170	1,310	1,300	-10.7	-10.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	4.3	4.4		
Total Employment	29,160	28,910	28,310	0.9	3.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	27,810	27,570	27,650	0.9	0.6
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,740	4,690	4,810	1.1	-1.5
Natural Resources & Mining	190	190	200	0.0	-5.0
Construction	1,500	1,480	1,570	1.4	-4.5
Manufacturing	3,050	3,020	3,040	1.0	0.3
Wood Product Manufacturing	530	540	530	-1.9	0.0
Paper Manufacturing	1,090	1,090	1,100	0.0	-0.9
Other Manufacturing	1,430	1,390	1,410	2.9	1.4
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	23,070	22,880	22,840	0.8	1.0
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,400	5,340	5,410	1.1	-0.2
Wholesale Trade	680	700	650	-2.9	4.6
Retail Trade	3,500	3,460	3,550	1.2	-1.4
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,130	1,090	1,120	3.7	0.9
Information	430	430	420	0.0	2.4
Financial Activities	2,020	2,030	1,980	-0.5	2.0
Professional & Business Services	1,610	1,550	1,590	3.9	1.3
Education & Health Services	4,540	4,530	4,470	0.2	1.6
Leisure & Hospitality	2,550	2,510	2,550	1.6	0.0
Other Services	1,160	1,180	1,140	-1.7	1.8
Government Education	2,620	2,630	2,520	-0.4	4.0
Government Administration	2,100	2,050	2,070	2.4	1.4
Government Tribes	640	630	690	1.6	-7.2

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

rior recently finalized a major water rights agreement for the Snake River, resolving a number of water rights issues as part of the Snake River Basin Adjudication, which is determining the priority of over 150,000 water rights in 38 of Idaho's 44 counties. The Nez Perce claims had been the largest outstanding issue in the basin. As part of the agreement, the tribe will have a defined role in managing 200,000 acre-feet of water in Dworshak Reservoir as well as the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. Kooskia National Fish Hatchery will be operated by the tribe following the agreement's implementation.

North Central Idaho Table 2: Cumulative Estimates of Population Change for North Central Idaho and County Rankings, April 1, 2000, Compared to July 1, 2006

County / Geographic Area	Population estimates		Change, 2000 to 2006		County Rank Change, 2000 to 2006	
	April 1, 2000, Estimates Base	July 1, 2006	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Idaho	1,293,956	1,466,465	172,509	13.3	(X)	(X)
Clearwater	8,930	8,324	-606	-6.8	42	43
Idaho	15,511	15,762	251	1.6	25	29
Latah	34,935	35,029	94	0.3	31	32
Lewis	3,747	3,756	9	0.2	33	34
Nez Perce	37,410	38,324	914	2.4	20	25
North Central Idaho	100,533	101,195	662			

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau

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Also as part of the agreement, the state will implement logging practices on state land in the Snake River and Clearwater River basins that are less detrimental to fish. Private landowners are offered Endangered Species Act protection if they agree to the practices.

LATAH COUNTY

- According to the career services offices at both the University of Idaho and Washington State University, this year's college graduates have a variety of good job prospects. Matt Bell is one example. He plans to stay on the Palouse after he graduates from the University of Idaho and put his computer science degree to work at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, where he's worked as an intern for more than a year. "I didn't really think I'd stay in this area," said Bell, 23. "I thought I would move on to a bigger city like Seattle, but this is a really good company."
- Employers are hiring more graduates this year, and salaries for new hires are 3 percent higher this year than last year, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' annual salary survey of beginning offers to college graduates. The class of 2007 may be entering one of the best job markets in recent years for new college graduates, according to the association's spring newsletter. In May, about 3,421 students graduated from Washington State University while the University of Idaho graduated 1,724. Suzi Billington, director of the Idaho career and professional planning office, said most students graduating with civil engineering degrees already have been hired. "We can't produce as many civil engineers as we have demand for," she said.

NEZ PERCE COUNTY

- Ammunition shipments to local gun shops and police departments are being delayed for months because the Army has more than tripled its demand for small caliber ammunition. Ammunition plants have dramati-

cally ratcheted up production, but officials acknowledge delays to police and retailers of up to a year. The government spent \$688 million on ammunition last year, up from \$242 million in 2001, said Gail Smith, a Joint Munitions Command spokeswoman. The most common rounds ordered are 5.56 mm, 7.62 mm and .50 caliber, she said. Much of the ammunition used by the Defense Department is manufactured at Alliant Techsystems Inc, or ATK, plants in Lake City, Mo., Anoka, Minn., and Lewiston, Idaho. "We have hired hundreds of people and turned our plants into 24/7 operations, where they weren't just a couple of years ago, to meet demand," said ATK spokesman Bryce Hallowell. "We're running full out." He said the Iraq war has depleted ammunition reserves, and the lack of foreign competition has also contributed to the surging demand. The strong sales helped Minnesota-based Alliant's ammunition systems group see a 10 percent increase in sales for the fourth quarter and a 15 percent increase for the last fiscal year.

- Members of Potlatch Corp.'s largest bargaining units in Lewiston have approved a new four-year contract. The ratified offer contains wage increases and changes in the current health care plan, according to a news release issued by the union. The news release provides no details about what compensation will be for the 1,050 employees in pulp and paperboard and consumer products covered by the agreement. Union members rejected an earlier proposed contract in April by 90 percent then rallied at Potlatch's May shareholder meeting. A few days later, union members and Potlatch executives reached the agreement that union members accepted.

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